



MITT ROMNEY
GOVERNOR

KERRY HEALEY
LT. GOVERNOR

EDWARD A. FLYNN
SECRETARY

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety
Department of Fire Services

P.O. Box 1025 ~ State Road

Stow, Massachusetts 01775

(978) 567~3100 Fax: (978) 567~3121



STEPHEN D. COAN
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THOMAS P. LEONARD
DEPUTY STATE FIRE MARSHAL

For Immediate Release: June 22, 2004
Contact: Jennifer Mieth, (978) 567-3381

Youths Charged With Setting Fires at Plymouth South High School

Two Plymouth youths were charged in Plymouth District Court Thursday for setting a string of fires at Plymouth South High School. Former students Kyle Harding, age 19, and Christopher Van Oss, age 18, were charged with setting fire to the dugout on January 2, 2004 and April 17, 2004 and for setting a fire at the north end of the building that damaged the auto body shop and the marine shop.

The fire was jointly investigated by the Plymouth Fire Department, the Plymouth Police Department and State Police assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Fire Chief James Pierson said, "We are very lucky that these fires did not do more damage than they did. Schools are an important resource to the entire community and setting fire to recreational and educational facilities is an outrage and insult to every resident."

1/3 of School Fires Were Intentionally Set

In 2002, there were 228 structure fires in schools reported to the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS) which caused two civilian injuries and \$362,640 in property damages. Fires in non-residential schools were up 25% from 182 in 2001. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the 228 school fires were considered intentionally set fires. Indoor rubbish fires accounted for 19% of these fires.

-30-